



# VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box 1049, Dillon, MT 59725-1049  
(406) 683-2327 or (800) 221-8271

Web site: [www.vec.coop](http://www.vec.coop)  
E-mail: [contact@vec.coop](mailto:contact@vec.coop)

## 2017 Annual Meeting of Members

Organizations like ours, a cooperative, are different because we adhere to a set of core principles. One core principle is that we function as a democratic organization controlled by our members. Member participation guides a cooperative and, as a member, there is no better opportunity to participate than our annual meeting. Currently, we are making preparations for our 79th annual meeting.

Members attending the annual meeting will hear our leadership discuss issues facing our cooperative, recap the previous year and receive information regarding our financial status. Our keynote speaker will be Sarah Calhoun, founder of the company Red Ants Pants, a women's "tough clothing" manufacturer in White Sulphur Springs.

Attendees of the annual meeting also will participate in the trustee elections. Vigilante Electric's service territory is divided into nine districts. Each district has an elected representative on the board of trustees who serves a three-year term. Terms are staggered to maintain six experienced trustees at all times. This year, elections will be held for District #3 (Townsend-Toston), District #8 (Dillon south) and District #9 (Dell-Lima).

In addition to a wealth of information, participants are treated to a wonderful meal courtesy of Vigilante Electric, prepared and served by the food services at the University of Montana – Western. They also receive a gift for attending and are entered into a drawing for prizes at the conclusion of the meeting.

Mark your calendars: On March 3, 2017, Vigilante Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting will be held on the University of Montana-Western campus in the Lewis and Clark Room. A formal announcement and invitation will be mailed to each member. Registration begins at 11:45 a.m., lunch will be served at 12:15 p.m., and the meeting starts at 1:15 p.m.

For Vigilante Electric, the annual meeting is the most important event of the year, the culmination of all the activities from the previous year. This important and informative event provides you, the member, an opportunity to help shape the future of our organization. Please join us.



Rollie Miller  
General Manager



## Outage Notification Numbers

M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**683-2327 or  
(800) 221-8271**

### Dillon

After Hours Mon. - Thurs.  
*Justin Bair* .....925-1540  
*Charles Wharton* ..660-1878  
*Gary Ferris*.....683-6321

### Weekends

**683-2327 or  
(800) 221-8271**

### Whitehall

After Hours and  
Weekends

*Marty Simons* .....287-3950  
*Chuck Romerio* ....491-5466  
*Zach*  
*Maershbecker* ...701-290-9265

### Townsend

After Hours and  
Weekends

*John Moos* .....266-3605  
*Chase White* .....459-3892  
*Marty Simons* .....287-3950

VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

# Vigilante Safety Roundup - A Different Perspective

By Rod Siring, Member Services

In the December issue of this publication we officially launched Vigilante Safety Roundups. This voluntary program provides our members with a way to donate to organizations in our communities that keep us safe. The article was titled "Help Us Help Other." Upon reviewing the article, the information was a bit limited and needs further explanation.

To start, Vigilante Electric Cooperative has a long history of giving back to our communities. Under the community section on our website you will see a list of organizations we contributed to in the previous year. The funding for these donations is limited, but we try to help as many organizations as possible.

On this list it shows that we have donated to 15 volunteer fire departments in our service territory. If we are exposing you to a roundup program for the first time, your inclination would be to assume that emergency service organizations would be the primary or sole beneficiary of the funding. This is not necessarily the case.

Our program is modeled after successful Safety Roundup programs administered across the country. In these programs, funding is not allocated based on the type of organization. It is based on what the organization needs the funding for. Any nonprofit organization within our service territory in need of funding for a project that is deemed safety related is eligible to receive funding.

To emphasize this point, I contacted Flathead Electric Cooperative, which has a very successful Roundup program and asked them for information on the types of organizations

that apply for funding through their program, and the types of projects funded. While they still get requests and provide funds to emergency service organizations, the overall diversity of the organizations applying is quite broad.

For example, they have helped organizations such as Back Country Horsemen, senior citizen groups, youth sporting organizations, ski patrol, museums, fitness facilities, food banks, area churches and countless other civic organizations. Many of these organizations have only two common denominators — their organizations were non-profit, and they needed help funding projects that were potentially lifesaving.

What types of items were funded? Flathead's roundup program has helped fund AEDs, first-aid kits, security lighting, helmets, radios, replacement of unsafe playground equipment, life jackets and assistance to improve handicap access — just to name a few.

We hope this broadens your understanding of safety roundup and how it can help improve the safety in our communities. You can find a description of the Vigilante Safety Roundup program on our website ([www.vec.coop](http://www.vec.coop)). At the

top of our homepage there is a link that provides information and an application for our program. This application can be returned by email to [contact@vec.coop](mailto:contact@vec.coop), by fax at 406-683-4328 or mailed to our office at PO Box 1049 Dillon MT 59725. If you have problems with the application, contact us at 800-221-8271 or 683-2327, and we will help you through the process.



## Prescription Discount Tracker

Total Paid Claims .....	553
Total Savings .....	\$19,433.13
Total Savings Percentage .....	40.99%
Dec. Paid Claims .....	6
Dec. Savings .....	\$238.92
Dec. Savings Percentage .....	56.35%

## Affordable. Innovative. Member Focused.

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Looking Out for You



# Fire Hazards from Portable Electric Heaters

Fire and water are very destructive, and when you combine the two — as would be the case in a structure fire there is often little worth salvaging. Every year we read about homes that are destroyed or seriously damaged from fires caused by portable space heaters. The statistics are alarming, but there are steps that can be taken to use portable space heaters safely.

Statistics from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimate that from 2008 to 2010, portable electric heaters were involved in approximately 1,200 fires per year. The reason is pretty simple. Portable electric heaters are high-wattage appliances that have the potential to ignite nearby combustible materials such as curtains, beds, sofas, paper, clothing and flammable liquids. If ignition results from a heater left on and unattended, a major fire could result.

The CPSC recommends the following for the safe use of electric heaters:


Never operate a heater you suspect is damaged. Before use, inspect the heater, cord and plug for damage. Follow all operation and maintenance instructions. Visit [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or [www.SaferProducts.gov](http://www.SaferProducts.gov) to see if your electric heater has been recalled.

- Never leave the heater operating while unattended, or while you are sleeping.
- Keep combustible material such as beds, sofas, curtains, papers and clothes at least 3 feet from the front, sides and rear of the heater.
- Be sure the heater plug fits tightly into the wall outlet. If not, do not use the outlet to power the heater.
- During use, check frequently to determine if the heater plug or cord, wall outlet or faceplate is HOT! If the plug, outlet or faceplate is hot, discontinue use of the heater and have a qualified electrician check and/or replace the plug or faulty wall outlet(s). If the cord is hot, disconnect the heater and have it inspected/ repaired by an authorized repair person.
- Never power the heater with an extension cord or power strip.
- Ensure that the heater is placed on a stable, level surface and located where it will not be knocked over.


- When purchasing a heater, ask the salesperson whether the heater has been safety certified. A certified heater will have a safety certification mark. See the following website for a list of accepted certification marks: [http://63.234.227.130/dts/otpca/nrtl/nrtl\\_mrk.html](http://63.234.227.130/dts/otpca/nrtl/nrtl_mrk.html).
- Never run the heater's cord under rugs or carpeting. This can damage

the cord, causing it and nearby objects to burn.


One other point that needs to be emphasized and repeated is only use portable space heaters as they were intended to be used: as a temporary and/or supplement source of heat. Portable space heaters have their place, but they need to be used and maintained properly.




## 5 DISTRACTED DRIVING STATS YOU SHOULD KNOW



# 3,179




**Number of people killed each year in vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers**  
(Federal Communications Commission, 2014)



# 1 in 4

**The probability that a vehicle crash involved a cellphone**  
(National Safety Council, 2014)





# 60%

**Percentage of people who use cellphones while driving**  
(Harris Poll, 2011)


# 21-24

**Age group most likely to send a text or email while driving**  
(Distraction.gov, 2012)



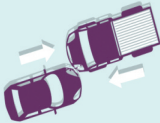



# 4X



**RISK**

**How much using a cellphone increases your risk of crashing**  
(National Safety Council, 2014)





AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



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*4.4 million tons, if you're counting.*

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